

No new matter has been added. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 102(e)

Claims 1, 3-23, 29, 31, 33, 34, 39 and 40 are rejected as being anticipated by Hofmann, U.S. Patent No. 6,418,372 ("Hofmann").

Applicants' representative frankly admits that he is perplexed by this claim rejection. It is respectfully noted that the Examiner also rejected the claims based on the same Hofmann reference in the Office Action mailed herein on October 10, 2003. In the response the applicants filed herein on January 8, 2004, independent claims were amended to overcome the Hofmann reference by adding the limitation of transmitting the direction of movement to the portable communication device. The Examiner apparently (and correctly) agreed that the claim amendments had overcome Hofmann, since in the next Office Action (mailed March 16, 2004) the rejection of the independent claims based on Hofmann had been dropped in favor of new rejections based on another reference. In short, the record in this case seems to indicate that the rejection that the Examiner is now presenting has already been overcome.

In any case, applicants will now quote some relevant passages of the response previously filed herein in January, 2004:

Before explicitly addressing the pending rejections, applicants will first compare some aspects of the directional system of the Hofmann reference with aspects of the significantly different system disclosed in the present patent application.

In Hofmann's system, a user 40 inputs a desired destination into a portable device 30 carried by the user 40 (column 3, lines 46-48). The portable device 30 communicates the desired destination to a direction indicator 20 (next to which the user is standing), and the indicator then illuminates an arrow on a floor, wall or pedestal, etc. (FIG. 1) to visually signal the proper direction of movement to the user (column 3, line 64 to column 4, line 8) to guide the user toward the desired destination.

In the system disclosed in the present application, as in Hofmann's system, the user carries a portable communication device and inputs a desired destination into the portable device. Via a wireless link, the portable communication device transmits the desired destination to a central server (not to a local indicator as in Hofmann's system). In the system of the present invention, the central server is able to detect the location of the portable communication device. Based on the

detected location of the portable communication device and the desired destination received by the server, the server determines directions to be communicated to the portable device. The server then transmits the directions to the portable communication device. Thus the present system, unlike Hofmann's system, includes transmitting direction information to the portable communication device carried by the user.

In other words, in Hofmann's system the portable device is used essentially as an input device only, with the fixed indicator 20 being used to provide output of the requested direction to the user. By contrast, in the system of the present invention, the portable device is used both for input and to provide the requested output to the user.

Turning now to specific claim language, Claim 1 is directed to a "method for providing directions", which includes "receiving at a server from at least one fixed wireless communication device information identifying a current location of a portable communication device having short range wireless communication capability". Claim 1 further recites that "the at least one fixed wireless communication device [is] located within a building". The method recited in claim 1 further includes "identifying a direction of movement to be communicated to the portable communication device to direct it towards a destination within the building" and "transmitting the direction of movement to the portable communication device from the server via a fixed wireless communication device".

From the above discussion of Hofmann's system, it will be appreciated that the Hofmann reference fails to disclose the limitation of claim 1 regarding "transmitting the direction of movement to the portable communication device". To the contrary, in Hofmann's system, the portable device communicates the user's desired destination to the direction indicator 20, but the indicator 20 does not transmit the direction of movement back to the portable device. Rather, the indicator directly visually signals the direction to the user via an illuminated arrow. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 1, at least as now amended, is patentably distinguished from the Hofmann reference.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of all of the independent claims based on Hofmann should be withdrawn, as indeed has already occurred once. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner either formulate a fresh rejection or pass this case to issue.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of the present application, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned via telephone at (203) 972-3460.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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